

Truth in limited editions

Hungarian Embassy and is warmly welcomed by his old friend Banica, a former engineer, now First Counsellor. The two men used to work together for the Cause but their paths eventually diverged: Banica became a prisoner of the Nazis, László of the Russians. They compare notes: the Nazis treated their prisoners even more cruelly but, in any way, it was worse suffering at the hands of your own comrades. The two men love and hate, trust and respect, each other. Banica gives László a lot of money, promises help to save him from the Russians.

spelled lunch in the company of his wife and stepson. He treats him as one should treat an old friend, but the gulf between the two is unbridgeable: one is an outcast, the other a pillar of the new establishment. The problem of one is how to sneak out of Moscow without being recaptured; the other has to face a rather dull reception at the Bulgarian embassy. The question begged: should one compromise to serve the cause as well as one can and accept the shame and humiliation of a comfortable life; or should one insist on proclaiming the truth from the rooftops because the truth is stronger than any idea and, besides, no idea can survive in an atmosphere of lies? Ruzhnicz wishes to believe that the atrocities and the tyrannies incidental to the regime: bad men are ruining a great cause. Laska has his grave doubts: still a devoted communist, he fears that the bad cause has, in fact, infected good

Confrontation is an honest book, a deeply moving book; an important book, but, alas, not a very pleasant piece of reading. It falls far short of not only of Tolstoy's masterpieces, but also of Lengyel's own excellent short stories.

Endre Lassu, a Hungarian, is—just as the author was—released from a Siberian camp and slips, illegally, into Moscow, to see his old friend István Bagza. The first part shows Lengyel's true power at his best. The ex-prisoner's fight, cunning and outrageous—why *should* he be so terrified to come to Moscow to see an old friend?—are wonderfully conveyed. He recalls the slave-maker's apprentice he met in Tiuman Prison. The man, completely drunk, murmured at four o'clock in the morning that "this is no life, just sheer existence". Nothing to worry about, his cellmates tell the newcomer, this comes under §10 (injustigation), in a few years in prison that's all. But they prove to be wrong: the drunken apprentice uttered his remark at Arbat Square, in the Kremlin, so he comes under §8 (terror actions) and §3 is always coupled with §1 (conspiracy). So the young man will get fifteen or twenty years; back luck! All this is told coolly and unemotionally; §8, 10, and 1 are facts of Soviet life, to be accepted as are the cold and the snow.

STANLEY

men or, alternatively, naturalists: the wicked ones. Banilezo consoles himself that at least there is no exploitation in this new society, but knows perfectly well that the capitalist exploiter has simply been replaced by the bureaucratic one. Lassu realizes that his great dream has led to disaster but still clings to his faith.

Lengyel is Lassu while Banilezo represents the present-day master. But, on another plane Lengyel is both Banilezo and Lassu: Banilezo represents the author's doubts, longings and nightmares that he has sacrificed his life and his freedom to no good purpose. Perhaps it is not a question of right and wrong. The Lassu of this world cannot be like the Banilezo, the Banilezo like the Lassu. One way leads to individual salvation but to the betrayal of the cause; the other might lead to victory of Ideals, but it also leads to individual purgatory. Lassu faces new arrest and more years in Siberia. Banilezo is promoted to a post in London. Lassu's truth is not proclaimed from the rooftops: it is circumscribed to a limited edition to the Banilezos of Hungary. As guidance and also as a warple.

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WALSER:
 Gallische Krankheit
 Frankfurt: Suhrkamp

Georg Gallist will doubtless be a certain favorite as the literary champion of the runner, doomed to die up the far in the West German race. His account of his life is a triumph for Marlin, as a humorist: "My father and book about the German society since 1945, opposing, urge to: to unite the together, which has had a opportunity of expressing the conditions of the Federal

the seventh and least member
group of friends living in Wies-
his professional character
uncertain

(B), a chemist (C),
(D), a cor aogals-player
and a television executive (F).
bound to each other b
around, dislike and b

follows the alphabet, so that G. is full of envy and hatred of the others, as impotent to impress or please them as he is to hold down a job, or get his writing published in the world at large.

Wheeled down by the completeness of his fallure, G. begins to withdraw, and in doing so observes that a baulked craving for success be devils the lives of A., B., C., D., E. and F. no less than his own. "Gabbler's disease," he finds, is endemic. For a while he refuses to shove any further truck with society, thus himself up in his room, and, like Kafka's salesman-insect, is fed by benevolent relatives and friends who place portions of food for him on the windowsill.

Up to this point *Die Galist* has been a little disappointing. *Krakuhl* has a personality felt in the first two sections, but the middle section is of a mediocre quality. The final section, which describes the disease's cure, is perhaps inevitably less compelling. G. has dropped his old friends and is now consorting with a Marxist group. Here he finds the warmth and sense of social purpose he has found wanting in A-F. Inclusive, it is no longer necessary for him to live in endless, wearisome competition with his peers. At least he can

G. is not very interested in Ideology, and admits that his school teachers would find it hard to find him a sense of purpose similar to that which he experiences in his communist friendships. But the priest did not mix with the poorer parishioners, whereas Pankraz Pudenz, the group-leader, is happy to drive about in a rusty old car, he bought for 350 Marks: one can concentrate his energies on, building a better world with his fellow-revolutionaries. It is doubtful whether G. is really converted to communism. In fact we are left with the impression that Galliss turns to the communist primarily because they are there; because he likes them, and because he has had to break with his old friends in the Catholic circles in Waller-

The Collected English Edition of François Mauriac's novels has been augmented by *Thérèse* (330pp. Bantam Methuen, £2.95). This volume contains Gerard Hopkins's late version of *Thérèse Desqueroix*, *La Fille de la nuit* and two stories involving Thérèse Desqueroix from *Moins que*

Is there a natural Blake?

J. BRONOWSKI:

William Blake and the Age of Revolution
207pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
£2.25.

The Blake Collection of Mrs Landon
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Introduction by Charles Ryskamp.
65pp plus 30 plates. New York: The
Pierpont Morgan Library. \$10.

WILLIAM BLAKE:

There is no Natural Religion
Trianon Press. Distributed by
Bernard Quaritch. Limited edition.
£35.

J. Bronowski's *William Blake: A Man without a Mask* was first published in 1944. An introductory chapter has now been added, along with some new points of detail drawn partly from the work of Erdman, Marston and others. The reissue under a new title, with the publishers' claim that it has "long been regarded as the outstanding account of Blake", offers a convenient opportunity for reappraisal.

The book was originally written in the apocalyptic atmosphere of the Second World War. With civilized countries being destroyed around him, Dr Bronowski wrote with urgency of a Blake who, for a brief period of his life, had spoken out against the evils of tyrannies, political, social and technological, before withdrawing, beaten and cowed, into obscure symbolic utterance.

The strength of this approach is twofold. It relentlessly penetrates Blake's statements in search of direct commentary on contemporary issues, thus establishing their historical

relevance, and it focuses attention on his gift for direct and passionate statement that effortlessly sweeps away the reticences and elegancies of eighteenth-century style. The reader is brought closer to the cutting edge and shining outline of Blake's poetry at its best.

Yet it is also a sweeping approach—never more so than in the opening of the main text, where two and a half lines of biography giving the dates of Blake's birth, marriage and death are followed by the laconic statement: "Little more is known of his life." It is hard to see how Dr Bronowski, with Muna Wilson's *Life* at his elbow, could have written this in the first place. Since then G. E. Bentley Jr has published the five hundred pages of his *Blake Records*; yet the statement is still allowed to stand. Sometimes, too, the onward thrust of the argument has a distorting effect: we are told that "the mystic and the revolutionary" in Blake "both speak together" when he writes

God only Acts & Is, in existing beings
or Men.
Therefore God becomes as we are,
that we may be as he is.

Comment and typography alike invite the reader to see this as a single statement, suggesting an active God who encourages mankind to join him in his revolutionary purposes. Only the observant will notice from the references that these are in fact two separate statements, made in very different contexts.

The weight of background material in the social and political chapters, also, is disproportionately large by comparison with the number of quotations from Blake's writings, which have to work hard for the desired effect. Blake occasionally gives a scintillating critique of industrial processes (as in his description of the workers who "grind/And polish brass and iron hour after hour, laborious task/Keep ignorant of its use") but his social criticism is more often cast in general terms, applicable to most

ages. Even when dealing with events of the immediate past, such as the American and French Revolutions, he is more concerned to look for the universal processes at work than to comment on specific events.

A crucial problem is raised by the sparseness of Blake's social comment when viewed within the range of his writings as a whole. Why, in particular, did social protest drop so sharply into the background after 1798? Dr Bronowski points to the strength of the forces aligned against sedition, the prosecutions for blasphemy, the laws against cheap newspapers. He acknowledges also a "caution and secretiveness" in Blake himself—but maintains that his mind might not have returned to the symbols of the earlier poetry "had it not felt it to be safer to go back". His age "conspired to defeat him"; it cowed, but it did not break him. He withdrew "for reasons which are plain and pitiful in his poverty and in his fears".

The difficulty with such a reading is that the heroic status claimed for its subject inexorably crumbles into the picture of a helpless victim, very much at the mercy of the fears of the "natural man". A decision not to publish seditious views would be understandable in the circumstances, but was Blake so frightened by the forces around him that he ceased to speak his mind even in his notes? And if so, in what sense can he be called "a man without a mask"?

Some of the omissions in such an account are opportunely corrected by the two other books under review. Dr Bronowski acknowledges a personal antipathy to Blake's visual achievement which, he warns us, is not shared by others—and indeed one would hardly guess from his book how much of Blake's life was spent in creating, engraving and colouring his own work. The catalogue (nobly edited by Mr Bentley) to London K. Thorne's collection, giving an account of further little-known copies of the

illuminated books, is a timely reminder of this side to his activities: it suggests a man constantly and closely absorbed in producing new versions of favourite designs. And, despite touches of bitterness at his lack of popular success, he strikes one as basically a happy man. To refer to some lines from the brief "biography" by quotation "in the catalogue":

I have Mental Joy & Mental Health
And Mental Friendship and Mental Wealth
I've a wife I love & that loves me
I've all But Riches Bodily.

Hardly, one might say, the cry of an oppressed victim. As Dr Bronowski mentions, engraving was a depressed trade during Blake's lifetime, but opportunities for commercial engraving seem not to have been his main concern.

Dr Bronowski's picture of a Blake not properly in control of his own experience, driven by poverty and fear into shadowy and obscure utterance, is further criticized by the appearance of *There is no Natural Religion* in a Trianon Press facsimile (which fully maintains the splendid standards set by the earlier volumes in this series). *There is no Natural Religion* is neither shadowy nor obscure, but in the collected writings the two series together take up little more than a page. The original plates, where each proposition has its own page and distinctive illustration, convey much better the weight that Blake evidently assigned to his statements. An important key to his thought as a whole (and executed before the period of his chief social and political writings), they show him already asserting that the basic failure of man in his time was a failure in perception of the world aright, a dwelling on the limits of phenomena instead of responding to the infinity in things. Hence the need for redress from the artist:

If it were not for the Poetic or Prophetic
character the Philosophic & Experiential
would soon be at the rule of all things,
& stand still, unable to do other

than repeat the same dull round
again.

This, surely, and not his sense of test, is the master-idea that dominates Blake. A few years later, he would have been carried by the events into a temporary belief in current revolutionary activities, he growing into a world-wide movement for the renovation of man. But it was not long before he was forced to suspect that the apostasy of his generation, had it passed: the important thing was to turn the right lessons. And I have him back to his first principles. He had a sense of the wonder and awe of the new industrialism (the opening of the revolutionary Albion Mills, followed by their burning in 1791, were events etched on the mind of Londoners) but his concern was to understand how man beings must have come to pay such exorbitant respect to the machine: he contended that men tolerated the constraints of dark Satanic mills in cities because they had already turned their minds into analysing machines.

ready. In *There is no Natural Religion*, he was saying: "The machine is lashed by its possessor, the dull round even of a universe, soon become a mill with complex wheels." It is this side of Blake's terpsichore which dominates his work as a whole, and it is this side which constantly throws out of focus concentration upon his more intimate social protest.

Since the Second World War have had to learn to live in a new scale: one of imminent nuclear apocalypse against which man's protest is perpetually weak and one of long-term survival which involves a hard look at the natural and metaphysical foundations of human civilization at large. Blake had a great deal to say on this question, too; and despite the obscurity of his later symbolic writings his service to him to sweep them away, the fantasizing effects of a flight of withdrawal.

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To measure godlessness

COLIN CAMPBELL:

Toward a Sociology of Irreligion
171pp. Macmillan. £3.50.

Colin Campbell's interesting and pioneering study of "irreligion" provides illustrations of the approach found in most sociology, and particularly perhaps the sociology of religion. One begins by indicating the inherent interest of the topic and inquiring why it has hitherto been neglected. One then suggests that this neglect is "significant" and relates it to the history of sociology and to certain general cultural currents. Nevertheless one rejoices that the neglect is about to be amended, also because of certain currents in contemporary culture, happily now more favourable. One has marked out a field, indicated the richness of the soil, upbraided the ignorant or careless who have passed by on the other side of the hedge.

The next step is the precise measurement of the field and its internal demarcation into appropriate strips. For this purpose various previous varieties of measurement must be passed in review, in this particular case Professor Shiner's five types of secularization and Professor Demerutis's definition of irreligion. For this or that reason these previous attempts are inappropriate or inadequate: Professor Demerutis, for example, is here upbraided for stressing that irreligion is lack of belief, whereas it is also a matter of action and feeling. This is the correct point at which to divide and subdivide yet further and to conclude that the phenomenon in question is both multidimensional and part of a continuum. It is still unclear what the elements of which this continuum is composed. There are the orthodox, the religious reformers, the world-be believers, those who want a substitute for religion, and those who neither believe nor want to believe and have no hangings after substitutes.

Uncertainty still remains about what it is that provides the point of

reference for all these points on the continuum. Dr Campbell here takes a clean dive into cultural relativism: irreligion is opposition to the dominant religion. Since he also mentions cultural and social nonconformity in this context it begins to look as if religion is defined by the fact of social dominance not by content. Hence it might follow that the sociology of irreligion should study, for example, the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union since it embodies dissent from established belief. Complications increase as Dr Campbell explains that in pursuit of the dictates of cultural relativity irreligion manifests itself as dissent in the nineteenth century and atheism in the twentieth century. Deism, however, is not specially distinguished by social and cultural nonconformity: it is rather distinguished by the fact that it is a variant of Christianity which had fairly wide currency among the elite of English eighteenth-century society, and which in terms of certain historic definitions of Christianity can be seen as doctrinally heterodox. It seems that however much Dr Campbell may twist and turn he wobbles between the logic of his cultural relativism and a quite different focus for studies of irreligion based on varieties of deviance from the historic formulations of Christianity provided by official Catholicism—or fundamentalism.

Dr Campbell does not focus on the great secular establishments of today, with their vast apparatuses of persecution and anathematization designed to illustrate what sociologists call the essentially plural nature of modern society. He is concerned rather with those people whose *private* focus of antagonism was religion, and whose other concerns were in part derivative. In effect, this reduces his subject-matter to the oddities of rationalistic and ethical pressure-groups in England and America in the middle and late nineteenth century to the recent modest revival of institutionalized humanism.

Of these he provides a competent historical account supplemented by some interesting observations about

the dilemmas of contemporary humanism. His historical account begins with secularism, a position so intimately linked with wider traditions of political and social reform as almost to violate his definition of irreligion as that which finds its primary object of antagonism in religion. The principal figure is Halyoake, the principal support (like that of Dissent) from the labor aristocracy. Dr Campbell locates the decline of secularism in the fact that its liberal stance was incompatible with the rise of socialism in the 1880s. He finds another source of difficulty for all his movements in an increasing apathy towards all religious questions. If this latter explanation is anything more than one of the ad hoc suggestions in which Dr Campbell is fertile, then the reappearance of organized humanism in mid-twentieth-century Britain is somewhat surprising. He charts the internal divisions of the new humanism, particularly the conflict between those who see it as largely a vehicle of irreligion and those who would like to be a socio-political movement. In this conflict humanism mirrored a dilemma experienced by the churches, and one may perhaps conclude that all organizations concerned with ultimate questions encounter considerable tension when they attempt to relate their perspectives to the immediate specificities of politics.

Dr Campbell concludes with an examination of the issues raised by the debate between faith and unbelief, notably the supposed relation between immortality for criminality and infidelity. He examines the springs of irreligion and finds them largely in ethical disgust with religion and in reaction to the class bias of religious organizations. His final point seems to be that a sociological stress on the positive functions of religion and its ability to solve problems of meaning overlooks its dysfunctional and the fact that it creates the problems it claims to solve.

Toward a Sociology of Irreligion is an interesting book, and if final sociological distinctions are supplemented by no more historical guesses, that is in the nature of the topic.

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To see things whole

HAROLD MEY:

Field Theory

Translated by Douglas Scott.
326pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
£5.50.

The author of this immensely learned book believes that "field theory" as it was developed by Gestalt psychology and most particularly by Kurt Lewin, is superior, as a basis for a variety of types of sociological and psychological analysis, to any form of positivism, to systems theory, and to the action theory of Max Weber. He sets out to expound the theory and to argue that much of what is most profitable in social science can be adequately stated in terms of field theory.

The notion of a field is taken over from the physical sciences but receives its first application to human affairs in the understanding of the Gestalt psychologists (in contrast to behaviourist stimulus-response theory) that perception takes place in wholes. This in turn leads on to Lewin's notion of life space, and of thought and action as involving "locomotion" from one area to another. What is most interesting about this is that the whole Gestalt movement is a revolt against the mechanistic aspects of that revolts against the failure of such psychology to deal with the voluntaristic elements of action by explaining them away scientifically. If anything Parsons is open to the same criticism as Weber; it is not that he does away with the action frame of reference; rather he is to be criticized for clinging to it too much. But he is to be criticized also for ignoring

the dynamic and conflictual elements which were allowed for in field theory. Most interestingly Mey sees as the clearest exponent of field theory in the social sciences, Gunnar Myrdal, writing in his early essay on the political element in economic theory in 1932. He has considerable time also for Mannheim. In Myrdal's case, of course, there is specific reference to conflicting interest fields: in Mannheim's there is a pervasive positivistic streak which is maintained despite his avowal of faith in the methodology of writers like Dilthey. But, while this choice of the best line in sociological theory (at least in the eyes of those who are repelled by the conservatism of systems theory) may be comprehensible, it is one which is equally possible if one regards physicalist terms used by Myrdal and Mannheim as an aberration and sees them as maintaining a perspective on social action, social relations and social conflict which Max Weber started. In fact, the line that runs from Weber to and through Mannheim and Myrdal can be used, perhaps in conjunction with humanistic Marxism, to provide precisely the sort of theory of society as a whole Mey is looking for; one, that is, which does justice to conflict and change. But we must face the fact that scientific metaphors are popular and prestigious in the social sciences, that the metaphor proposed by Lewin is less misleading than many others and that Mey attempts to apply it to modern theoretical problems in accordance with very good instincts indeed. Even those who don't accept the value of this as an overall approach might still find much that is suggestive in particular formulations and models.

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If it's bourgeois, it's bad

CHRISTOPHER CAUDWELL:

Romance and Realism

Edited by Samuel Hynes.
144pp. Princeton University Press.
London: Oxford University Press.
£2.90.

"Christopher Caudwell" was the pseudonym of Christopher St John Spragg, a prolific journalist and, in the later years of a short life, a Marxist critic. Born in 1907, he was killed in the Spanish Civil War, on his first day of combat, February 12, 1937. At his death, Samuel Hynes reports, "he left a mass of unpublished manuscripts: a book of apophorisms in the manner of Nietzsche, two book-length collections of stories, three plays, a mock-epic on the Anglo-German Naval Agreement, and two additional studies, of which this book is one." Professor Hynes has confined his editing "to the correction of obvious mistakes and to the insertion of a few explanatory footnotes".

Caudwell's intention in writing *Romance and Realism* was to trace "those chief social changes which produced change in the form and technique of the novel and poetry". Professor Hynes describes the book as "a Sociology of English literature". But these are large claims, and it is difficult to see in what sense they could be sustained by the present book. Professor Hynes admires Caudwell's ardour; he maintains that his essays on literature, "together with *Illusion and Reality*", are certainly the most important Marxist criticism in English. There may be a misunderstanding here. Professor Hynes may have in mind only such works as those he mentions in pro-

nexion with Caudwell's Marxist criticism, works of the 1930s, including Alick West's *Criticism and Criticism*, and Ralph Fox's *The Novel and the People*. But if he means literally what he says and claims, it is hard to see on what grounds he can prefer Caudwell's criticism to such works as William Empson's *Some Versions of Pastoral*, Raymond Williams's *Culture and Society*, Arnold Kettle's *Introduction to the English Novel*, or even Granville Hicks's *The Great Tradition*. And if he were to take his bearings from the best Marxist criticism, without restriction to the English language, and speak of Benjamin, Lukács, or Goldmann, it would be hard to expend time and energy on Caudwell at all.

Romance and Realism does not do what it promises. In fact, it is little more than a syllabus for a survey course in the political English literature. A lecturer might type out pages such as these to remind himself of the general argument which he would later try to develop, but he would regard them as his lecture notes, not as a finished book. He might jot down something like this on Blake:

Blake begins by being eighteenth century, rapidly revolts to Elizabethan Golden Age, moves on to Goethe and eventually can find no satisfaction until he reaches a sort of super-Protestantism, which is almost psychotic. The most genuine revolutionary, his tragedy is the outcome of an age when, as for Dostoevsky, there were no social forces making for the real release of individualism. He was caught in the bourgeois circle. His latest in Milton and Job needs no explanation.

There is Caudwell's sole reference to Blake, in a footnote of the form

of Blake's poems, there is not a word. Blake, Scott and Jane Austen are disposed of in two pages. Later on, when Caudwell comes to literature with which he is more familiar, the notes are more extensive, especially on Kipling, Hardy, Galsworthy and George Moore.

Caudwell's standard criticism of an author, as of Lawrence in *Studies in a Dying Culture*, is that he was caught in the bourgeois circle, he never freed himself from his petit-bourgeois associations, he criticized the bourgeoisie while adhering to it, he did not understand that the proletariat was "the dynamic force of the future". Every work becomes a mere function of society. "Literary art is conditioned at every step by social relations", the imagination is a slave to social forces. No wonder the criticism is so blunt: "Joyce as we saw had no consistent viewpoint; his attitude to reality is fluid, hesitating, and unperceptive. *Ulysses* is therefore hesitating, formless, and unreal." On Eliot: "The Waste Land" has a pessimistic, so utterly hopeless a tone: there is no hope when the present abandons itself to the past. "Writers go in pairs, it is unnecessary to distinguish between them: Fielding and Smollett; Webster and Tournier; Addison and Steele."

The argument itself is familiar. The proletarian revolution is inevitable, and it is also beautiful. It is beside the point whether the transition from bourgeois to communist is itself smooth or bumpy or beautiful or free, since it is the inevitable fate to be healed and society to become happy and free.

This sentence comes from *Studies in a Dying Culture*, and it is the rhetori-

cal gist of *Romance and Realism*. At the end of the latter book, Caudwell spells out the rules for the revolutionary:

A revolutionary must be a member of the revolutionary party. He must be a totem in its problems and help to form its tactics. He must create plans it has formed and which he helped to form. He must accept its setting, and then accept and implement the party line. He must be loyal inside his group, and put his small or large share at the disposal of his revolutionary party. It is a party that although he believes in the need for a revolution he remains bourgeois.

It is consistent with these tenets that Caudwell should ignore the role of the imagination in the creation of a work of art. In strict sense, he is not a critic at all. There is no evidence that he was highly intelligent, reader or writer, responded to the imaginative life of a work of art. Everything in his mind is general, abstract, detached, has no response to the detail of a poem or a novel. The proof is that he never feels bound to explain anything from the author's point of view. Caudwell's technique of change, but his sense of these complex matters is so blunt that he does not risk the test of detail. He is a single line of poetry or a paragraph in *Romance and Realism*. Nothing is produced, examined, or desired. No perception is desired. No perception is desired. No perception is desired.

It is beside the point whether the transition from bourgeois to communist is itself smooth or bumpy or beautiful or free, since it is the inevitable fate to be healed and society to become happy and free. This sentence comes from *Studies in a Dying Culture*, and it is the rhetori-

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T.L.S.

71st Year 28 APRIL 1972 No. 3,661

Viewpoint

BY W. J. WEATHERBY

New York is hard on the imagination. The city supplies more melodrama daily than you could get away with in a dozen novels. No wonder so many young novelists sit impotent at their typewriters, convinced that they can create nothing to compare with the thunderbolts of reality outside.

Some of them escape into the New Journalism (High Priests: Tom Wolfe, Gay Talese, Jimmy Breslin, etc.) and soon claim their lengthy works of reportage using a novelist's tricks are better than novels. That is like comparing a Kersh photograph to a Rembrandt painting, and yet one sympathizes with these young writers for justifying their fears and their sense of being overwhelmed by experience. It's good for journalism, too.

The imagination is downgraded every day. Hack works of non-fiction get acres of reviews while many competent novels — genuine creations — get a miserly paragraph or pass unnoticed. Sometimes it seems as though Americans are afraid of the imagination. Certainly the educational system, so closely tied to the job market, does its best to kill it. And the three groups that retain any real imaginative freedom — very young children (before TV), artists (who are unfraid), and people whose minds are regarded as abnormal (often safely put away in mental hospitals) — have only a lowly status in society. For the sake of the status quo, it is just as well. Only demented imaginations could take the behaviour of most politicians seriously. Is this why so many of the aging young on pot cop out, for the little we know about pot suggests that at least it unlocks the cell door for the imagination? The poor undernourished brainwashed dying prisoner is suddenly given a full meal and shown the open skies. Handy stuff for anyone. No wonder people are so silly on pot, and some of its proper liquor and a good novel is ahead in order to release the prisoner.

As a sometime reader for New York publishers and magazines, I have been impressed by, first, the intelligence of the fiction submitted. It seems much smarter than that of my generation. It is also loaded with smart references. It took us all our time to digest Freud (and learn to reject a lot of it, to be free of it). In these stories, characters seem thoroughly familiar with all the latest intellectual influences. The locale is often a college campus, the chief character often a rather rabidly associated professor. I suppose this is the result of having a generation of writers more formally educated than ever before. Second, the poor imaginative quality (and therefore the writers' unwillingness to take risks).

Celebrity. I'd mention that the late Langston Hughes predicted it, if I were not now scared of name-dropping myself. It never pays to preach. Ecology may have passed its peak. Educational publishing may no longer be a safe goldmine if money gets any tighter and the whole sheep-like system of adoptions goes to hell. What's the next upcoming trend? Anybody spotted one yet? Or tried to create one? Nobody ever mentions fiction. The combination of inflation and recession has nearly put first novels out of business. I recently read Graham Greene's autobiography, *A Sort of Life*, and was impressed by his determination to endure as a writer, and by his publisher's (and editor's) loyalty. After ten published books, his first printing was still under 4,000. I doubt whether a publisher now would give a novelist so long to become a good investment.

Are we going to lose some Greens or will they simply have to possess even greater powers of endurance? One thinks of Nabokov enduring the loss of a country (and a fortune) through revolution, his father through murder, his second home through Hitler, above all perhaps his language through continued exile, and yet going on to produce the marvellously imaginative *Lolita*. The happy mural? Writers — and the imagination — must surely be irresistible. All they need is a talent great enough to make the risks and distractions seem meaningless.

But that is asking for a lot in our conformist age: it begins to seem more and more akin to madness. How forward-looking of the Soviet authorities to put away some difficult writers who wouldn't shut up in mental hospitals rather than the old conventional prisons! When I was a boy in England, artists were already regarded as "Bohemian", which was a close neighbour to Official Crazy. Critics of the system were apt to be dismissed as "Bolshevik", which I did not understand but knew from the time that it must be a dangerous form of neurosis. Yet in my boyhood, still overcast from the Depression, these were generally the only people who told us how things should or could be — who could make an imaginative flight out of our wartime austerity into a world more worthy of us. Sometimes the downgrading of the imagination seems part of a deliberate attempt being made everywhere to maintain the status quo at all costs. It is surely a hopeless attempt, too, unless we are all to be transformed into the kind of people you meet in non-fiction, rather bloodless types and limited to the surface of things. Publishers have a great responsibility not only to make a profit but also to make sure literature (and all it stands for) is not drowned in a flood of non-books, and all our senses with it.

A writer I admire has just written an essay studded with name-drops. In writing of a friend, he mentions not the people who loved him but the celebrities who showed up for his funeral. Does he do this out of fear, for name-dropping is the curse of insecure American writers? One can see the effect on his writing: the imagination can't take it and gets constricted. The style, usually so precise and muscular, loosens up disastrously. Sometimes it would be humane to prevent writers from knowing each other. Literary politics is a very subtle game in New York, played mainly by very intelligent and very bored people, but it is not a game that the imagination working at full speed can take seriously. A good editor would have asked him to cut out the name-dropping as it cheapened the piece. There might have been a row. He might have taken himself off to boother publisher. The relationship between editor and author is like a love affair without love.

Fashions. Black writing, they say, is on the wane; unless you are a

I would like to write about the relationship between the two people who become professional writers, the kind of people who jobs in publishing, and the kind of people who buy books, particularly hardcover books. But we do not know enough to do any more than speculate. On the whole, we write about what they are like with; people in publishing like that deal with matters they are familiar with or 'sympathetic' and buyers usually seek out what they can identify with. Three groups come from a comparatively small section of society, and not from a healthy section, then much of our writing is unenriched, unrecorded in any way, and our literature suffers an unconscious form of censorship. This is a point minority groups find of making, and they plunge us too deeply into generalizations. The imagination boggles. How would it be if literature if writers were rewarded (with time, with jobs) for extensive formal education (which does not help imagination and may even retard growth); if publishing people from all walks of life and a dose of formal education were necessarily a qualification; if we were more evenly distributed twice as many people could do harder work?

In my Kafka cell on a good I imagine a revolution with fiction back in power, but on a I see publishing going out of business in a chaos of small publishers and a thousand different magazines. And then I escape the classic the way we are losing. I peer the cell window at a patch of blue sky (or is it only in my imagination?), and I escape into my mind. I count: our friendship with the rest of nature has been so little written about the only subject really worthy of it. But it is wild a wilderness of easy boundaries, no labels, no assurance, no safe way back. Labelling it Sex. Or Biology. Botany. Anthropology. Sociology. For in no time at all the bright blue sky will have faded into the mind, and the prisoner be left in the four walls of his cell. And we need to break out.

NEXT WEEK:

Books and the BBC

The first of a series of articles by David Wake discussing the relations between them.

Shambala

Shambala of Berkeley, California, is a publisher dedicated to exploring and mapping man's inner world, and to expressing creatively the potential of man's evolution. Routledge is distributing books for Shambala, and the first, just published, are *The Lunatic Cycle* by Dane Rudhyar £1.20. *Mudra* by Chogyam Trungpa £1.75. *The Song of Songs* by Carlo Suarès £2.80. *The Pulse of Life* by Dane Rudhyar 90p. and 1234567890 by Arthur Okamura and Robert Creely £1.10, and watch out for the mouth-watering *Tassajara Bread* Book £1, coming on May 25. For further information on these and other books write for our Shambala prospectus.

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T.L.S. THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT CHILDREN'S BOOKS

FRIDAY 28 APRIL 1972

In and out of fashion

BY GILLIAN AVERY

But except for a small handful of masterpieces they are more interesting to the social historian than to the literary critic. Harvey Darton's study, *Children's Books in England*, still far and away the best on the topic, was written "as a minor chapter in the history of social life... a record of what certain human beings meant to write, and of their reasons for writing if they can be discovered".

Harvey Darton saw the whole period with which he dealt—from the Newbery books to *Dream Days*—in perspective, with its varying fashions and fads. He did not apply literary standards; he gave us much space in fairy stories as to the outraged horror of the "rational" writers of the time who opposed them; he included the Sunday school reward books, and the boisterous boys' blouds that

is the most popular children's writer of the century, and you should not give a book such an all-embracing title as Mr Eyre has, and state in your preface that its purpose is to examine "the main trends in the development of British children's literature during the first seventy years of this century" if you are going to concentrate on the "prestige" books read only by a minority, and ignore the new writer whom all of them know, and who has dominated childhood for three generations. Enid Blyton deserves a chapter in any such book. Even more interesting than the emphasis she exerts over children is the extraordinary enmity she has attracted from the children's book wallahs who, instead of fighting to protect the older schoolchild from the pornography and violence that beset him, are furiously engaged in apiking the guns of a most upright and well-meaning writer for the younger ones.

Though the field of the "good" children's book has now been well trodden, Mr Eyre's account of it is quite interesting (though perhaps too abundant in minor names) and his literary assessments shrewd. He is not afraid of having misgivings about some of the "in" names of the moment. He admits that children read their books at a completely different level from adults, and that they miss the subtleties authors with their eyes on the critics introduce nowadays. But he does not see that by pleading for even more serious critical attention he is encouraging this tendency. It seems to me that children would enjoy themselves a lot more if we relaxed some of this anxious brooding over their reading and became more light-hearted. And this book would have been more interesting if more space had been given to what children do read, instead of what the experts would like them to read.

For this reason two books compiled for the collector have much more feel of a period. A. S. W. Rosenbach's catalogue of his own collection, *Early American Children's Books*, has long been the unique authority on the subject. It was issued in a limited edition in 1933, and it now appears as a Dover paperback, a beautiful piece of book production. His earliest book is 1682, his latest 1836 (a reading book for the Seneca Indians).

In between are religious tracts and parental advice, nursery rhymes, adventures, fables, and such books of warning as *Vice in its Proper Shape*, or *The Wonderful and Melancholy Transformation of several Naughty Manners and Misses into those Contemtable Animals which they most Resemble in Disposition*. (This includes the "surprising trans-

He protested that for reasons of space he could say little about aesthetic merits. In fact he indicates a lot. In a sentence or two he can convey the delicious fantasy of *Mopsy the Fairy*, the preposterous yet compulsive quality of *Eric* ("that immovable moral jellyfish left behind by the tide"), and put his finger on what makes *Alice* unique.

But succinct and astute as his literary comments are, the great virtue of Harvey Darton is the way he relates the books to the prevalent adult attitudes of the time. "It is children that read children's books", William Godwin told Charles Lamb, "but it is the parents who choose them." Did those parents of the past want to have their children instructed, frightened into good behaviour, persuaded into it, filled with love of God, or were they content to have them merely entertained? Children's books will tell us. They will tell us too a great deal about contemporary taste, about the virtues and prejudices in vogue—whether the emphasis is on truth-telling or obedience, on team-games or on ponies. But precisely because of this they are, with a few notable exceptions, ephemeral. Thirty or forty years later and all interest, except for the historian, has gone from them.

the insidious shrank from. This is where he gains immeasurably over the more reading guide. To concentrate only on books which are acceptable to current educational theory is to ignore a great deal.

Frank Eyre's *British Children's Books in the Twentieth Century*, a new edition of a book originally issued in 1952, is better than some reading guides, in that he does preface it with a brief survey of publishing trends of the century; from the early days, still dominated by the giants of the previous age, through the doldrums of the late 1920s and 1930s, to the postwar renaissance and the present-day cult of the myth and pseudo-myth, and the appearance of the latest genre—"novels for new adults". He gives a short account of paperback trends, but he does ignore, except for two passing, slighting references, the phenomenon of Enid Blyton.

When *The Sunday Times* a couple of years ago produced a list of people who had had a formative effect on the twentieth century, they chose only two children's writers: Beatrix Potter and Enid Blyton. On this occasion I had to admire the perspicacity of the Sunday papers, and the sacrifice necessary in shedding received opinion. Of course Enid Blyton

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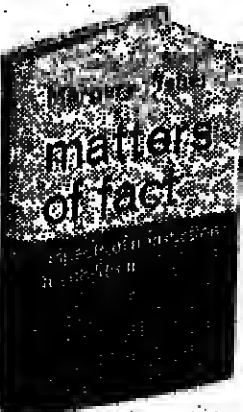
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Caught up in history

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Illustrated by Robert Micklewright
Oxford University Press. £1. 119
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MARGARET LOVETT:

Jonathan
Faber and Faber. £1.50. 1571
09835 X1

ANN SCHLEE:

The Consul's Daughter
Macmillan. £1.50. 1333 13516 4)

The historical novel for children has for many years set a standard by which other writing has been judged. Always a fruitful source of a good yarn, the heroic past offers authors a chance to explore fairly complex themes of personality and judgment, relating the events of bygone days to contemporary concerns and proving the constancy of recurrent patterns of human experience. The list of successful authors in this field is long indeed and to them we owe much that has come to be ranked among the best writing for young adolescents.

Part of the reader's satisfaction comes from finding his (or her) immediate concerns treated in the setting of another time and place, thus enabling him to speculate about them, freed from the limitations he knows, yet accepting those of Roman Britain, the Civil War, the Crusades. Thus many of the best-known novelists deal with themes such as what constitutes loyalty, what is worth dying for, or on what conditions is life worth living, by allowing the lives of apparently ordinary boys and girls to cross those of the great: strolling players see Queen Bess, for example. Or there are others who more directly chronicle the lives of the young in other centuries when the *rois de France*, so confused in our own day, were more clearly defined. The triumph of Rosemary Sutcliffe's art, for example, lies in her exploration of the question: "What do I have to do to be accepted as an adult?"

Perhaps its very success, and the skill of the authors who saw in it the kind of writing they wanted to do for young adults, have meant that the historical novel has reached a point where it is bound to change if it is to continue to be significant. Repetition would mean it lapse into the formulas of lesser costume fiction.

Thus the nostalgia caused by E. M. Almedingen's *Aqua*, completed shortly before her death, is doubled. The stories of this sensitive and gifted writer, all based on the chronicles of her family in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, are infused with devotion and nostalgia. Her last book, *Aqua*, also marks the end of an era. Although she does not shrink the social implications of a feudal society which persisted into our century, the author empathizes so completely with the heroine, Anna, that the reader sees the book as autobiographical fiction in the best tradition of "the good old days". Anna is nearly drowned crossing a river in an overloaded ferry boat and later set upon by wandering ruffians who are subsequently hanged, but it is difficult to feel that the calm of the house of the scholarly eighteenth-century seed-merchant is ever really threatened. Her brother, after travelling in the rest of Europe, marries the daughter of an English parson. His going is a muted tragedy. Anna herself is all that a remarkable little princess should be in childhood, a little princess, her father's helper, a little princess in the mercantile world of her Moscow suburb. The virtues of the intense identification of the author with her subject are seen in the details of occupations, food, the rituals of the Orthodox year, the benevolent paternalism. The shadows of coming events are short. Anna's life is a scholarly idyll, beautifully written. It is unlikely there will be any more of this kind.

Fewer concessions are made to the grimmer facts of history by Margaret Lovett in *Jonathan*, the story of a family of orphans at the mercy of the poor laws of the early nineteenth century. The reader's pact with the author is to believe in the arrival

of Jonathan, a wandering disciple of Junius, bitterly impassioned about the conditions of the enslaved poor, at the moment the children's mother dies pulling the parish cart. The youth makes the children his responsibility and they travel north by road and canal, working in the potteries, mines and mills of the industrial revolution. "At all men's mercy". The facts of the conditions of orphaned apprentices have never been in doubt, but to feel them through the pores of a crying baby, a slower country child of seven, bright literate twins of ten and a de-formal dwarf from a rare-show is a new experience. Liz, the eldest, is not convinced that Jonathan, so respected by grown men for his views and skills, will saddle himself with dependent children, so it is not a simple case of innocence triumphing in the face of oppression.

Accustomed as we are to high standards of verisimilitude, this is nevertheless a distinctive book. The pitiable state of the poor, locked in their bonds of necessity and exploitation, is matched by the barely repressed anger of the boy whose characterization bears the author's conviction of the necessity to preserve human dignity in the face of overwhelming odds. Jonathan's pity is for those who, like Thomas, are maimed by life; his contempt is for those who give up their freedom and use necessity as an excuse. A closer analysis of the author's relationship to his reader reveals a fine indignation about the lot of children sleeping under the tables in the pottery, killed by ungarded mill machinery, hardened by vicious treatment, all carried by convincing dialogue. Interestingly enough, literacy, the burden of much present-day educational concern, is presented in both of these novels as a means of freedom. Yet these generalizing features are shown in highly particularized settings so that the rights and wrongs of any situation are seen to have ambiguity and complication usually missing from writing for adolescents.

This breakthrough to a new individualized kind of historical novel is even more apparent in Ann Schlee's second book *The Consul's Daughter*. As in her first book, *The Strangers*, the author selects a historical incident—here it is the siege of Algiers in 1816—and recounts it from the specialized viewpoint of a participant. Ann, daughter of the British consul, for the events Miss Schlee follows Lord Exmouth's dispatch of the humberdment. Ann and her stepmother, her senior by only two years, and her baby half-brother were smuggled aboard

the sloop *Prometheus* when the siege was in preparation. The three were to have been taken to Gibraltar but the *Prometheus* turned back with the advance British fleet and took part in the bombardment. Worn into one of the sieges of the "wooden kingdom" of Algiers, the "war of the sea" is a life outside the shelter of the British garden which the three are used to. At her departure, she is estranged from her stepmother, her playmate. She packs her bag, carrying her half-brother, and childhood has gone, the experience of a night has replaced her romantic daydreams.

This novel is a fascinating one to Miss Almedingen's, while her stands in between them. The story is simply episodic, the events of her life even less consciously planned and wakes when it is over. When I think of home it is not only the shattering awareness that he has thrown away all their childhood values and moved into a new no-man's-land but also the feeling of the period is also there. The author is a chronicler, the characters differ in subtle depth.

Miss Schlee's characters are complex with a difference. Even her inner and outer world, the heart of the town, the evening on board ship, the powder and battle are palpable reflections of feelings of those involved. The reader sees each clearly and episode in the heroine's story partially, puzzled, with the mental understanding of some whose sensibilities are shocked to make a pattern of what seem to grasp at once: the surprise mode of address, the consultant about his father, the death of a friend, the midshipman, beside which the fire and the heroism are but the noises of a moment. In this sense, the reader, thanks to the skill with the short sentence, is left with the story forward. The story hunt the result is more than a victory. It may be that the historical as a heroic tale is giving way to the pluralism of a significant historical episode as it changes the lives of people involved in it by chance. Showing that she has all the needed to provide a stirring tale, Miss Schlee picks up a theme which the best practitioners in the genre have dealt with: what is like to be alive at a given time.

Scratching a living

HESRA HRINSMEAD:

Longtime Passing
Angus and Robertson. £1.25. (207
12276 B)

Longtime is the fictional name of a settlement in the Australian blue-gum forest. Based on the author's own childhood, this is the story of the Trueland family who settled there in the years of the Depression. Father ("There's a wild look in that young man's eye," said Grandmother Wilkins, "even if he is a theology student") gave up missionary work in Java to join his three brothers on selections in Longtime; there he constructed a ramshackle house for his growing family, and by saw-milling and farming earned a precarious living for them. There were always rabbits to shoot or potatoes to dig; though the five children might go barefoot, they did not lack food.

Mother, realizing, "it was no use telling her offspring that their father, to be quite honest about it, was a mao who by nature was not cut out to be a farmer", succeeded by hard work and improvisation to keeping life cheerful, contriving clothes from flour sacks, somehow providing tomato sandwiches ("a rare delicacy") for birthday treats, and teaching the children by correspondence

lessons at the kitchen table with by one they were old enough to down to Sydney to school.

Assured uncles and aunts tell the story, the aunts not all as well as Mother: Aunt Imogen, who all in white, took a quick look at Longtime and presented Uncle with an ultimatum which after long drink taken, he ruefully agreed to his brothers. "It was her decision. Settled for the moment. Should have taken the money and gone to Melbourne. I'm a theologian. There you are." By turns funny and grim, this is an authentic account of a comparatively neglected, heroic aspect of Australian development. Grown-ups and children portrayed equally vividly, the novel has in common is a sense of the Australian blend of toughness and sentimentality which will appeal to readers well on from the "age 10" up" suggested by the publishers.

Collins's "Evergreen" Library, a nicely produced series (40p each) those who like to see books in the series recently added Reginald to his list. The three latest titles appear in the format are *Cliffhanger* to *Tame a Shere*, *Alan Carter* to *Leane's Sound of Thunder* and *Ribbon of Fire* concerning the life of the famous Australian bushman, Reginald. The series is a

Holden's little sister

HEA FOX:

Live in the Sea
Macmillan. £1.60. 1333 12972 5)

the theme of her new book *Live in the Sea* Paula Fox has taken one of the most poignant situations in life—that of a girl when she grows up and away from home—is growing up and away from home. It is a very good story.

Carrie, who tells the story, is just a girl, alternately tough and tender, but likeable all the time. She lives in an apartment with her mother and pleasant parents and her first husband, an unknown quantity who hasn't been heard of for years. Carrie has heard Ben all her life. When Ben is around it is usually notice other people. "When I think of home it is not only the shattering awareness that he has thrown away all their childhood values and moved into a new no-man's-land but also the feeling of the period is also there. The author is a chronicler, the characters differ in subtle depth.

Miss Schlee's characters are complex with a difference. Even her inner and outer world, the heart of the town, the evening on board ship, the powder and battle are palpable reflections of feelings of those involved. The reader sees each clearly and episode in the heroine's story partially, puzzled, with the mental understanding of some whose sensibilities are shocked to make a pattern of what seem to grasp at once: the surprise mode of address, the consultant about his father, the death of a friend, the midshipman, beside which the fire and the heroism are but the noises of a moment. In this sense, the reader, thanks to the skill with the short sentence, is left with the story forward. The story hunt the result is more than a victory. It may be that the historical as a heroic tale is giving way to the pluralism of a significant historical episode as it changes the lives of people involved in it by chance. Showing that she has all the needed to provide a stirring tale, Miss Schlee picks up a theme which the best practitioners in the genre have dealt with: what is like to be alive at a given time.

Problems of pain

THE HANDICAPPED CHILD is a familiar figure in realistic fiction for children, going back at least to early Victorian times with *Marjorie's Hug* in *The Yellow Boy*. There are two main ways of looking at him: from inside, as a person, and from outside, as a problem. The book is a study in the latter, inviting the reader to feel himself what it would be like to be unable to walk or hear or what may be; and from outside, seeing the reactions of normal people and others to having a handicapped child as a part of the social life. Either way, physical affliction is hard to handle fictionally, not least errors of fact or taste. The books reviewed here are all concerned with handicapped children, and only one can be said to add to its reputation.

This is *Mister O'Brien*, which, as it says, is also the one that identifies itself consistently with its central character and thrusts the reader most into the midst of things. It is *Mister O'Brien*, the magnificent one-legged man who can't walk or hear or what may be; and from outside, seeing the reactions of normal people and others to having a handicapped child as a part of the social life. Either way, physical affliction is hard to handle fictionally, not least errors of fact or taste. The books reviewed here are all concerned with handicapped children, and only one can be said to add to its reputation.

It has the trappings of a novel, it is doubtful whether *Mister O'Brien* is a realistic story; there are details that don't convince, and the character who turns up in the story seems even less solid than the character of *Mister O'Brien*. But the book has the impression that the author did not know quite what to do with her, and the main impact of

that has ever been written"—this Ben has vanished. In his place there is a tall thin person in a drooping coat with the buttons off and the collar up, looking older than anyone there. He has stopped washing, stopped playing and stopped communicating; his only, maddening, form of action is to write everywhere and on everything the cryptic phrase of the book's title.

He says it in many ways. I've found it written on matchbook covers, on brown paper bags from the supermarket, in dust on the windows. That makes sense because you can't get window cleaners to come any more. He writes "Blowfish live in the sea" on the envelopes of unopened letters he finds lying on the hall table. This makes my father mad.

Once again, how familiar and how vivid it all is. Ben's bare room and the bed without bedclothes (pillows are bad for the brain), the dreadful girl, India, that he brings home, with her floppy hat and moth-eaten fur coat, her yellow sunglasses and "her little honey head all covered with thin, shining slippery looking yellow hair", the rawhide thong which he ties round his own head. Finding this the last straw, symbol of everything that distresses them, his mother and embarrassed step-father, whose relations with Ben make Carrie feel as though the toaster was going to blow up, beg Carrie, as intermediary, to get him to take it off. But what is the use? They are no longer in touch. "I feel as if my clothes are all held together with safety pins and my shoes don't fit, neither of which is true. How could it all change back again?"

But it does, when a letter comes from Ben's father suggesting a meeting and Ben asks Carrie to go with him, needing her to bolster him up in his nervousness. Ploused, but still

having to walk warily, she makes the bus journey with him and together they experience the skazy hotel and enfilade of the other town, savour the absurd encounters and are shaken by the frightening ones, as when they are accosted by the terrifying "army" of the drug peddlars in the park. At last they meet Ben's wonderfully drawn father, alcoholic, romantic and untruthful, but still alive, in some way which Carrie's father isn't, still possessed of exasperating panache and charm. As though at long last he has found the tail end of a clue in his hands, Ben elects to stay with his father to help him with the last of his wild schemes while Carrie, tough as ever in her dismay and disapproval, "hating them both and saying scornful things to them in my mind", has to go home. But even as they say goodbye we know that a year of new ideas is starting to work in her mind. "Ben squeezed my arm, and as he drew his hand away I saw for the first time that it was a large, grown-up hand."

Back at home, confronted by Ben's strange parting present to her, which begins to explain so much, both Carrie and the reader are left to sort out all that has happened, and like those intricately folded paper flowers which open under water the host of ideas and questions which the author has so subtly planted begin to open and develop in the mind. What has been happening to Ben (and to so many others with him) as he shies away from the glumster life ahead? What has put him back on course again? Carrie's guess, leading her, too, along the boudering path, will be as good as ours is, and for each one of us it will be a little different: that is what makes this such a living book.

The book is made by the rawness and confusion of the Robbins family life. Unfortunately it is hard for even an attentive reader to remember which is which among all these children and their friends; the whole thing becomes an exhausting name-and-age chase. The last chapter, in which (it appears) Pippa is cured by a Christmas miracle, is too sentimental to ring true.

Monica Dickens's "World's End" books about the Fielding family have everything needed for popularity: easy professional story-telling with many neat and some humorous touches; bold, simple characterization; a general sense that "we" are the right sort of people, even if a bit hard up at the moment; and above all the irresistible odour of boredom. They are light reading, and there's nothing wrong with that; Picolet, the elder branch of Pan, have recently issued *The House at World's End* and *Sunflower at World's End* in paperback (20p each).

The trouble with *World's End in Water* is that its theme requires more weight than the author cares to give it. The Fielding children, come to the rescue of little Priscilla, confined to a wheelchair by injury to her spinal cord, and teach her to ride a pony. In the end "the wheelchair lay on its side in the grass. She was free." Good. But Priscilla might almost as well be a doll, for all the imaginative involvement there is in her situation. And although admittedly the story doesn't pretend to look at the world through Priscilla's eyes—she is always seen from outside—one is left feeling that Miss Dickens has dealt too easily with a distressing human predicament.

PAINDANCE, ANDREW: *Mister O'Brien*. Heinemann. £1.45. (434 92720 1). [To be published on May 1].

ELEANOR SPENCE: *The Nothing-Place*. Illustrated by Geraldine Spence. Oxford University Press. £1. (19 271335 3).

JO RICE: *Robbie's Mob*. Illustrated by Shirley Hughes. Kingswood, Surrey: World's Work. £1.35. (437 71532 3).

MONICA DICKENS: *World's End in Water*. Heinemann. £1.45. (434 93448 0).

A Selection from Oxford



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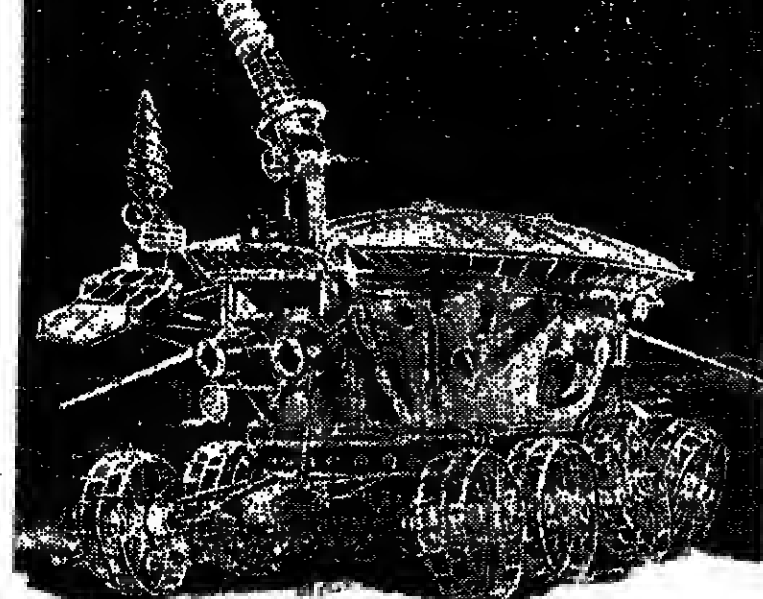
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Earthsea revisited

URSULA LE GUIN:

The Tombs of Atuan.
Gollancz. £1.25. (575 01308 2)

A book as formidable as *A Wizard of Earthsea* might well raise doubts about any work that follows. Could the feat he managed a second time, without pastiche or self-imitation? But Earthsea has many regions and, indeed, *The Tombs of Atuan* (named as an Honor Book for the Newbery Medal) again has its own completeness. Though it keeps to a more restricted theme, it is very clearly out of the same imagination; its value comes from the same qualities. One is a total realization of place, time, customs, laws of behaviour, of magic, too; the Atuan detail is as unerring as that of the youthful Brontës' imaginary countries. And though, in the areas of the supernatural, the author's eerie force is hard to match, her human creatures—and even wizards and priestesses—are marvellous first and last—hold the foreground interest; they change and grow, and this change directs the plot.

Ritual and responsibility are the opposing poles of the new book, and ritual holds together the "Place". In a desert region—a lonely group of temples and dwellings in the shadow of nine black stones, each some twenty feet high.

Once the eye saw them it kept returning to them. They stood there full of meaning, and yet there was no saying

what they meant... These nine stones were the Tombs of Atuan. They had stood there, it was said, since the time of the first men, since Earthsea was created... They were the tombs of those who ruled before the world of men came to be, the ones not named, and she who served them had no name.

The girl Tenar is marked out as an infant to be High Priestess of the Nameless Ones. It was her chance to be born when the last one died; the age-old rule of appointment, though many village mothers (like Tenar's) would try to conceal the birth. We see her, at the age of six, perfectly imaged, go through the rites that turn her into Arha, the Eaten One (her soul being eaten by her Masters) and follow her through mistle years of duties, ceremonials, and a special education: she must re-learn, as it were, what she knew "before she died". At 15, haughty, bored, but still unquestioning, she comes into her full powers: she must impose the ultimate dreadful penalties (for treason and sacrilege); hers alone are the mysterious keys to all the unknown doors; only she may explore the great dark city that lies under the great dark city that lies under the tombs, with its dust and dread, and evil prisons, and rooms of untold treasure, and the vast frightful labyrinth. This underworld, where all paths must be learnt by number and touch, for no light is allowed, becomes her refuge: the only kind of journey that she knows.

But someone does enter the unenterable: the wizard Ged, seeking the

ultimate treasure, the broken half of an ancient silver ring. It has no runes, he tells her.

The other eight are known to Magi. Pirr that protects from madness and from wind and fire, Ges that gives endurance and so on. But the broken ring was the one that bound the first dominion, the sign of peace... It was lost there have been no peace kings in Tavnor.

For the girl's first sense of culture has given way to an unwelcome joy as his strength, and magic, ebbs, as he lies near death, lost in the maze she brings him her own meagre food and hides him (by a route so secret and so terrible that even she has never dared to use it) in the room where the ultimate treasure is exposed in lie. But by contravening laws by which she lives, she denies all that she owns, her authority, the aid powers are not dead, the wind tells her, in the magnificent escape chapter, but they are not for him to worship. She must take on the greater burden of freedom, which is heavier than the old one of belief. It is not a gift given, but a choice made, and the choice may be a bad one. The road goes upwards towards the light; but the ladder veller may never reach the end of it. If the book could flag it is that as they make their terrible way through the hills and dunes, but this is a journey and a path; it is a journey and it is not commonplace.

Nightmare landscapes

THE LANDSCAPE, with its latent power of movement—earthquake, landslide, historical revelation—has been a feature of the best writing for the young for the past decade. Sheena Porter, Alan Garner, William Mayne, Penelope Lively are successful exponents, to a lesser or greater degree, of the "school"—and now along comes cheerful Martin Cobalt with a book, *The Swallows*, which shows just how difficult it is, unless an author is prepared to exercise his craft with the utmost care and restraint, to produce a book worth reading in a class which boasts some literary classics. As a new writer—since suggest Mr Cobalt is an established author writing pseudonymously, tongue well in cheek—Martin Cobalt does us a commendable feat of driving the occasional character in depth (others are mere ciphers). He also has the ability to make the landscape, this time three pools which flood and whirl, drawing into the centre eye any living thing interfering with their level, terrifying.

Hideous thoughts are given fantasy expression in Derron Knight's new (American adult) SF collection, *Destruction X*: Robert Heinlein, for instance, envisages a brave new world in which the intelligent have heeded the warnings about over-population but the less intelligent have not. How does the intelligent elite rid itself of the sub-standard mass? By making propaganda for hot days on the (unreliable) planet Venos—and constructing shoddy spaceships for a one-way passage. Very chilling—but Isaac Asimov, whose story "The Ugly Little Boy" comes last in the book, redeems the SF writers from the charge of total heartlessness in a beautiful and touching tale about a Neanderthal boy who is brought into existence by a scientist and is only saved from being liquidated (as "an experiment not worth maintaining") by the devotion of the nurse who looks after him and is prepared, in travel back with the child to his time, rather than live or mother, Asimov's is the best story in a collection which maintains the reputation Derron Knight already has for selecting high quality SF.

Andre Norton's *Dread Companion* is as compulsive and relentless as a nightmare—a hideous nightmare to which the reader would not return if the author once allowed him to wake up; but Andre Norton binds her spell tight. Barre, a planetary child, is possessed by an evil power and leads her reluctant brother and the older woman; in whose care the children have been placed, into a land of monsters and mingles where touch, smell and taste of the indigenous vegetation affect vision and dimension, where age and time take on new and terrifying meanings.

Out There is not space, but the wild countryside of the Sierra Nevada, in the twenty-first century. An elderly lady and five nature-loving children dare to leave the protection of their plastic dome-city in order to discover whether or not insects, birds and animals still exist. Neither pore SF, nor straight nature, nor run-of-the-mill nature, but a mixture of all three, *Adventures in the Land of the Living* will have special appeal for a generationally orientated audience.

All these books are for over 10s—so, despite its "New Adult" label, *Septimus and the Minister* by Stephen Chance, a spooky, totally innocent, comic detective story complete with old-fashioned private investigator and policeman. Who is having the Minister? Why is the Minister heard at night played on a long-curved organ? Stephen Chance is meticulous and witty writer who wears his knowledge of churches and electronic devices, organ music, and parish history as lightly as he wears his pen.

The intensity and gripping mystery of Edgar Allan Poe survive for readers with iron nerves. Since, therefore, that a selection from the easily accessible "Tales of Mystery and Imagination" should have been published under the title *Tales of Terror and Fantasy* in the Children's Illustrated Classics series—with the illustrated pictures which sweeten the Joan Kuhn's *Same Things Elsewhere*, a "New Adult" collection of true and fictional suspense stories though it contains Edith Wharton's fearsome Breton dog-house "Kerfol"—is a sweet dream of comparison.

MARTIN COBALT: *The Swallows*. Gollancz. £1.45. (575 01308 6)

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The language of warriors



From *Black Wolf*

ALMOST the only way to write an acceptable novel about the remotest past is Henry Treece's way, which treats prehistory symbolically, compressing the centuries so that conflicting ages may be seen simultaneously. Charles Vivian attempts the more difficult task, in *Captive of the Tribe*, of showing one age at a time of crisis. Juk is exceptional among the Hill folk in wishing to understand rather than to kill; so he takes a wolf cub and befriends it, and the cub breaks the traditional taboos of his tribe. It is all rather too tidy for conviction, and these primitives are remarkably articulate.

Charlemagne and his knights are articulate too, to excess. Like all epic heroes they have a fine line in rhetoric which Jennifer Westwood does justice in *Stories of Charlemagne*. In fact when these tales were written they belong to the rambling tradition. The Westwood has taken half-a-dozen stories from the huge mass of material and given a pattern in them. She starts with the splendid tale of the Fool Bertha which harnesses one of the most familiar of traditional folk-tales—that of the subsistence of a pseudo-history. Bertha was the mother of Charlemagne. The Fool king himself shows up badly in the succeeding tales. There is no sign of the wise ruler and the patron of learning in this moody, ruthless fragment.

His cruelty offends even his own knights. He is the implacable enemy who carries a feud even against a woman. He behaves shabbily in the story of Hucen of Bordeaux with Folal, a "New Adult" collection of true and fictional suspense stories though it contains Edith Wharton's fearsome Breton dog-house "Kerfol"—is a sweet dream of comparison.

In *Black Wolf* civilization is destroyed by the nomad hordes. In *The Dancing Bear* the Huns are threatening Byzantium but it is not they who are the mindless ruthlessness of Huns; rather it is the great evil, Silvestor, the slave is "on the loose", one of those wanted for questioning by the shambles, slow-witted but implacable monster which was the

government of the Empire. From this there is no escape, not even death.

Peter Dickinson, who has already proved his mastery in two very different types of story, now tries his strength in another. *The Dancing Bear* is a magnificent tale of adventure, a penetrating study of history, and a close examination of human and animal relationships. In each it is an outstanding achievement. Silvestor's master is killed and his young mistress stolen in a "Trojan-horse" raid by Hunnish communists, and he is left to suffer the traditional fate of slaves who know more than is good for their future masters. But Silvestor escapes from the city in the company of Holy John the household saint and Bubba the dancing bear. This beautifully assorted trio takes the road, threatened more by imperial civil servants than by warring Huns, and after many adventures they find the Lady Ariadne and the Hunnish Khan. Here Holy John goes his own way. He has already selected himself as a slave in the Huns, and it is a good role for the old ascetic who was a soldier in his unregenerate days and knows the language of warriors. Silvestor is left to escort his lady, not home, far Byzantium has nothing to offer a usurped heiress and to him only a hoasty death, but to a wonderful wish-fulfillment fortress in the wild, where he can play king at the castle for ever. It is a highly satisfactory conclusion.

This is to say nothing of the bear. Bubba's is a fine portrait, far she, although never more than animal, is full of personality. From her first appearance, playing cat-and-mouse with the five crabs which are her sopper and weeping because the honey jar she has licked has fallen just out of reach, till at Silvestor's birthday feast she gets drunk and has a "hideous hangover". Bubba gains the reader's unconditional devotion. There are more conventional companions for an odyssey than a slow, moody, thick-headed dancing bear, but none more endearing. Mr Dickinson is firmly established as one of the most original, versatile and uncommitted of contemporary writers for the young. He confirms and extends this reputation in a novel which tells a great story with restrained eloquence, with deep human understanding, and above all with tolerance. There are no villains in *The Dancing Bear*, not even the Empire, only people following their desires towards happiness or disaster.

Not all roses

PHYLLIS BENTLEY:
Sheep May Safely Graze
Gollancz. £1.30. (575 01356 7)

Phyllis Bentley's skill as a narrator makes events flow along so pleasantly that it is only afterwards, perhaps, that the reader is aware of his disappointment. Henry Clifford's father is killed in the Wars of the Roses, and Henry is pursued by Yorkists in revenge for his father's merciless execution of the young Earl of Rutland. He escapes from Skipton Castle to the Cumberlands, with the daughter of an old woman he accidentally shot with an arrow. The story begins with this dramatic incident. In which the human reactions seem somehow improbable, particularly Margaret's meek acceptance of her mother's death and her new position as lady's

maid at the castle. Character throughout seems observed from the outside, so that not even Henry really comes alive.

There is also an onlookerhood and lack of purpose in many of the incidents during the years Henry spends as shepherd to the man Margaret marries, until his lands are at last restored by Henry VII. Henry is fortunate, for instance, to meet at different times both rival kings in the Wars, roaming his part of the countryside. Moreover, in order to make clear the vicissitudes of these confusing reigns, various characters are compelled to relate chunks of thinly disguised history. Such flaws are somewhat redeemed by the author's loving picture of the Northern countryside in all its moods, and by William Stobbs's three fine drawings.

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JOAN TATE

Illustrated by Trevor Stubley

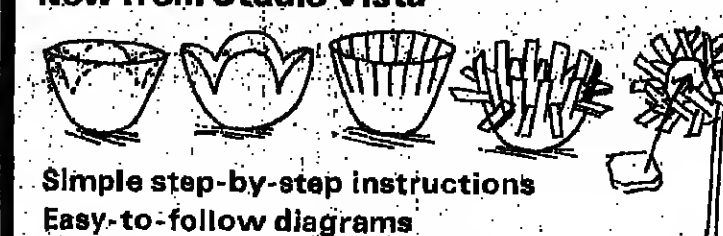
Will dreamed of living on the moors above his small grey town in the valley, until he met the wild boy up there. They had little else in common, apart from an interest in each other's background, yet their passing friendship served a valuable purpose. £1-15

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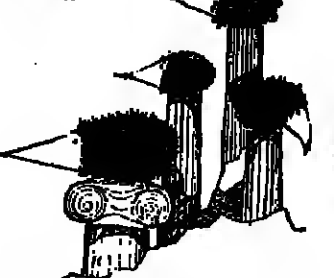
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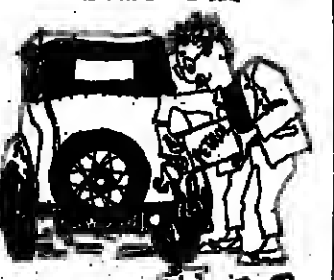


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The Bear of Friday Creek
(460 0583 9) Dent, £1.40 each.

ERNEST THOMPSON SETON:
King of the Grizzlies
Dent, £1.30. (460 0502 3)

Adrienne Richard's *Pistol* is an interesting, if uneven, story of a boy's growth to maturity in the Montana of the 1920s and 1930s. The plot sounds conventional enough: during school vacations, young Billy Catlett escapes from the narrow confines of small-town life to the freedom of work on a nearby ranch. Then comes drought followed by the Depression, and the whole social and economic fabric of the Mid-West crumbles. With it vanishes Billy's chance of release from his weak, inadequate parents and querulous elder brother. Desperate to find work, Mr Catlett enforces the family into moving to a shanty-town on the Missouri, site of a New Deal dam-building project. It is then that Billy manages to stand up for himself by opposing his father and brother. He sets out for the East and independence, without the false dreams which have deluded many of his friends and relatives.

The author excels in the set-piece descriptions: life on the ranch with its established annual cycle of work; the dry, wind-swept hills; the tough, experienced ranch-hand more prepared to witserise than openly admit to an act of kindness; the importance of horses and good horsemanship. These are features one has perhaps come to expect of a Western, but the writing and observation have throughout an honesty and perceptiveness (particularly when dealing with Billy's first affair) which raise this story above the conventional. Billy, the narrator, never completely emerges as a definite personality—perhaps due to the uneasy fusion of the novel's two elements, life on the ranch, and relations with the Cat-

lett family. Yet this very uncertainty of character represents a recognisable stage in development towards maturity. And despite its period setting, the overall picture of a society thrown from high confidence into depression has greater relevance to contemporary American disillusionment than anything in the books discussed below.

Both of Walt Morey's stories convey a refreshing sense of Alaska as a real country, and a feeling for its landscape and wildlife, not in other respects these are two unrewarding tales. *Deep Trouble* tells of eight-year-old Joey's attempts, inevitably successful, to support his family as a deep-sea diver following his father's death in a diving accident. The author's first-hand experience of diving makes the opening chapters interesting, but gradually the pattern of challenges met and predictably overcome kills all spontaneity.

However, its touches of characterization distinguish it from *The Bear of Friday Creek*, the far-fetched story of Eric and his giant pet, a Kodiak bear. As a result of his drunkard father's machinations Eric and his bear unwillingly become the star turn of a small travelling circus in the western United States. Their bid to escape home to Alaska provokes a storm of truly American-scale publicity, resulting in Eric and bear being restored to their home town, as star tourist attraction. This combination of schmalz and American commercialism leaves an unhappy impression, not least at a time when conservationists are fighting to preserve animals within their natural habitat; and the illustrations (by Derek Colford) are extraordinarily inept and stylistically inappropriate.

In any history of man's growing ecological awareness the works of Ernest Thompson Seton deserve mention. Seton's stories are contemporary with *The Jungle Books* and *The Just So Stories*, and he shares Kipling's embarrassing tendency to idealize when writing about animals. Unlike Kipling, however, story-telling was of only secondary importance to Seton: his avowed intention was "to convey the known truth"—and it is this realism allied to close observation of his animal protagonists, and avoidance of anthropomorphism, which distin-

guishes his work from that of his predecessors.

Yet Seton's stories are much more than tracts, and Dent have performed a service in following up their Children's Illustrated Classics edition of *The Trail of the Sandhill Stag and Other Stories* with King of the Grizzlies, two of Seton's longer stories. Both "Monarch, the Big Bear", and "The Biography of a Grizzly" chronologically relate the lives of fictional bears. It is a tribute to Seton's close identification with his subject and forceful writing that he holds the reader's attention throughout. An added appeal lies in his idiosyncratic marginal drawings, sometimes usefully informative, at other times humorous, satirical, or quietly moralizing. Beside Seton's sketches, Mirko Handak's four colour plates seem prettily inappropriate.

Desert trek

KELMAN D. FROST:

Salinro Troll

Illustrated by John Rnherts.
Nelson, £1.95. (17 221 05 0)

Ahmed Bader, an Arab merchant living in the interior of Algeria, migrated with his family to an oasis town 250 miles across the Sahara desert in the early days of the war for Algerian independence. Their mode of travel was the traditional camel caravan, and to the age-old hazards of a journey across the desert were added the dangers of encounters with gun-runners and rebels. Kelman Frost went with them, but he does not feature himself in this account of the journey. He tells it in fictionalized form and manages to give it ships and coherence often lacking in narratives of actual events, thus holding the reader's interest. The very good impression he succeeds in conveying of the life of the desert nomads is made the more telling by being presented through the eyes of an Arab family whose way of life is completely different from theirs. It is a pity the standard of the illustrations is not up to that of the text; and the price seems excessive.

Teenage embarrassments

THREE books aimed at readers in their early or middle teens who like stories in a contemporary setting. Two are specifically for girls.

The Siege of Trapp's Mill is a tale of rival teenage gangs. One gang decide to spend the night in a derelict mill on the bleak outskirts of a northern town. The others besiege them and two hitch-hiking students who have come in from the snow. The situation ultimately turns out to be very serious and the denouement is quite desperate. However, one wonders who will read this book, since most of the boys who enjoy violent stories of this kind are likely to be daunted by the sophisticated vocabulary.

The Other People tells of Kate, who is sent to stay in her aunt's boarding house because her mother has remarried and gone on a Parisian honeymoon. Kate is lonely and very disappointed by the drabness of Sea View, while at first all the adults seem to her caricatures. Her attempts to make friends with two girls of her own age are only partially successful; but teenage girls will enjoy the trivial quarrels and the sessions of making-up and dressing-up to go out and meet boys. There is a muted mystery about the house next door which is solved to reveal a timely of long ago.

Janet McNeill writes with her usual careful observation of detail and sympathetic understanding of young people's hopes and fears and embarrassments. Kate is a character who grows in understanding and emerges from her adolescent dreams to take responsible action when her aunt needs her.

Polly's plan to make money for a party by charming away warts for payment. Her scheme clearly leads to dire trouble. This is the fourth book about Polly Devenish, who has now left school and started at technical college. As a separate novel it is weakened by the need to understand tangled relationships established in the earlier books. However, once the reader has grasped these, the story weaves clearly enough in and out of changing adolescent relationships and budding love affairs. Rodie

In paperback

With 500 Puffins now available, their current catalogue proudly proclaims, Penguin continue to provide a magnificent service for children. Some publishers, notably Faber and the Oxford University Press, prefer to put out paperbacked editions of the best of their children's authors under their own imprints—these are more elegant than Puffins, but also more expensive.

Thus Faber, perhaps with current Egyptian excitement in mind, have produced Rosemary Harris's *The Moon in the Cloud*, the extraordinary tale of animal-tamer Reuben's journey from his corner in the desert next to Noah down to Kemi (Ancient Egypt) with his ill-assorted, highly articulate animal companions, from Faber, too. *The Mouse and his Child*, Russell Hoban's wonderful and appalling vision of a family in search of survival, these cost 50p each, and *The Mouse* has Lillian Hoban's gently prompting pictures.

Sudbery also allows adults lives of their own and problems which are noticed by their offspring. But it is all too superficial to stretch the mind or imagination—enjoyable but trivial.

ANNABEL FARFON: *The Siege of Trapp's Mill*. Dent, £1.40. 1460 05840 (1)
JANET MCNEILL: *The Other People*. Chilton and Windus, £1.30. (7011 0494 5)
RODIE SUDBERY: *Warts and All*. Andre Deutsch, £1.25. (233 95929 7)

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Miss Harding's excellent "Great Composers" series continues to grow with a new Haydn biography, no less an authority than H. C. Robbins Landon. But, surprisingly, it turns out to be the least satisfactory of these three recent additions, partly, perhaps, because one has such high expectations of it. The problem is that Mr Robbins Landon seems uncomfortable in his brief of writing for the young and untutored, and although some chapters—for instance those on the operas and Haydn's London visits—are entertainingly written, the general tone of the book is heavy and rather stilted, with the author veering awkwardly between a natural desire to educate and an apparent fear of blinding his readers with science. One wishes that Mr Robbins Landon had taken some risks in the latter direction, because his over-cautions approach results in very little real discussion of the music, which could have been the outstanding feature of a book by such an eminent Haydn scholar, where he does become more explicit, as in his eloquent account of the Creation, musical illustrations are judiciously lacking. In fact, unlike most of the other books in this series, the musical illustrations are sparse and unrepresentative, and often do not seem to relate to the text.

Overcaution is certainly not a feature of James Harding's choice of musical extracts to illustrate his biography of Rossini. He goes so far as to print two full score extracts to show Rossini's orchestration, an exact idea which would be even better if the transposing instruments were written as sounding and the parts were not left in the alto clef; but this is a minor quibble, Rossini is not what the musicologist would call a "great composer" but his presence in the latter series is justified both by his popularity and the fact that relatively little has

been written about him in English. Mr Harding launches into his subject with gay abandon, and it is not surprising that he indulges in a little embroidery at times, he writes with an enthusiasm and vitality that almost equal Rossini's own irrepressible showmanship. He also manages to include some real discussion of the music—including a whole chapter on the Rossini overture, a particularly good idea in a book designed chiefly for amateurs who will doubtless know the composer best for his hors d'oeuvres. There are the inevitable omissions and over-simplifications—there is very little on the general musical scene either when Rossini started composing or later, no mention of Mozart's treatment of Beethoven had nothing but admiration for Rossini, and (perhaps unintentional) that Rossini "invented" the accompanied recitative in *Elisabetta, Regina d'Inghilterra*. However, there is a good concluding chapter on the music of Rossini's retirement, a field often neglected by critics and commentators.

Of course the temptation when dealing with a colourful figure is to lapse into a series of entertaining anecdotes leaving no room for anything else. Both Mr Harding and Elaine Padmore in her biography of Wagner (who easily beats Rossini for spectacular life-style) manage to strike a reasonable balance between biographical detail and musical fact. Miss Padmore has the ideal measure for this type of book—entertaining and as satisfying with a nice feeling for irony: a definite advantage when writing of a composer who so lacked humour (and humility!) in viewing his own achievements. But few biographers seem to be able to remain objective once entangled in the hypnotic spell of Wagner's life and music, and where Miss Padmore falls down is in her uncritical attitude to Wagner's romantic attachments. Minna is portrayed as an insensitive hussy, selfishly creating difficulties for her genius husband by not only objecting to his infidelities but reacting with a "plebeian outburst" to his (allegedly) plebeian love for Mathilde Wesendonck.

On the 7th April 1858 Minna intercepted a letter from her husband to Mathilde. Proudly she saw it as evidence of a bourgeois "affair". It was useless to protest the innocence of her love, impossible to explain to Minna about lofty, spiritual bonds. And of this we read that

"Minna had always regarded his brilliant wife as a superior being and knew now that she was Wagner's true complement".

As in the music, Miss Padmore comes fully to grips with the implications of Wagner's baroque language, and, inevitably, finds it difficult to express such technical concepts in layman's terms. But she makes a valiant attempt with "Träume", and the idea of quoting Liszt as an example of Wagner's chromaticism is a good one. Was it lack of space that made the last chapter so perfunctory? Miss Padmore allows herself only a page to sum up Wagner's achievements and to assess his legacy to the future, an important gap in an otherwise well-balanced biography.

LILLA M. FOX:

Instruments of the Orchestra
Lutterworth, £1.25. (7188 1710 9)

This is a lively account of the standard orchestral instruments and their history with amusing and imaginative if rather haphazard-looking illustrations by the author. Mrs Fox writes well for young people, and her only serious flaw is in not providing musical illustrations, which really do seem essential in a work dealing so directly with the raw materials of music. Because of this, her comments on the use of the instruments rather than their history are necessarily rather vague, and this is particularly true where twentieth-century music is concerned. In fact, the twentieth century reveals the real weakness in what is otherwise a well-documented book. Admittedly, there is some reference to a few standard classics but the chapter on percussion, for instance, does not even mention the brave new world of the all-percussion ensemble (Vibraphone, Cymbal, et al), and though there is a tantalizing reference to (presumably) the author does not specify Stockhausen's *Mikrophonie I* for electronically processed tom-tom, electronic music in general is dismissed in half a sentence. Nor do Bartolozzi's new sounds for woodwind get a mention. In a word, too much reliance on the faithful old textbooks (Forsyth and Curcio are often quoted) and not enough research. But within its fairly narrow limits this is a readable introduction to a huge subject.

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